

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 12, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--~~Photos~~ Figures 1 and 2 appended hereto show, in cross section, white corundum and Cerpass grains, respectively.--

Replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 6, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--Complementary analyses (by scanning electron microscopy) for studying the crystalline phases showed that the products of the invention consisted of corundum crystals 1 (alpha-alumina) surrounded by a nonstoichiometric $\text{MgO-Al}_2\text{O}_3$ spinel phase 2 (see appended ~~photo~~ Figure 3). The mean size of the corundum crystals is 18 to 20 μm . Typically, 90% of the crystals have a size of greater than 9 μm and 90% have a size of less than 27 μm . 100% of the crystals have a size of greater than 5 μm .--